

THE GATOR NEWSLETTER

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The 4th AA Bn Family Readiness Newsletter is intended to inform Marine families of their unit's activities and to make important information available to them. It is published on a quarterly basis. The 4th AA Bn is comprised of units from Tampa FL, Norfolk VA, Gulfport MS, Jacksonville FL, and Galveston TX. The 4th AA Battalion's web address is www.mfr.usmc.mil/4thmardiv/4thaav. The site contains information on family readiness, the key volunteer network and UNITAS.

Did you know Reserve Marines and their families are eligible for dental coverage through United Concordia's Tri-care Dental Program? For more information visit their website at www.ucci.com

JACKSONVILLE IS NUMBER 1

Company B (-) Wins Up Gun Competition

Marines from Company B (-), representing the 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, have proven themselves to be the best Amtrac gunnery crew in the Marine Corps. **Lance Corporals Pedro Manrique, Joseph Merritt, and William Sessions** emerged victorious from the Marine Corps, 2002 Up Gun Weapons Competition that was held on August 14th and 15th at MCB Camp Pendleton, California.

The annual event pitted four competing units — Assault Amphibian School and 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Assault Amphibian Battalions — against one another for bragging rights and possession of the large championship trophy.

The competition was extremely taxing. Many intricacies were incorporated into the scenarios given to the teams. Each crew drew for their vehicle and then had to get their weapons systems ready to fire. Every vehicle

had its own unique challenges.

The firing range was grueling. Each crewman had to produce an accurate range card that was scrutinized and graded by evaluators. There were delays and hours of waiting. The competition began early the first day and wasn't over until the early hour of the following day.

In the end, the Jacksonville team won by one point over the Assault Amphibian School

by scoring 50 out of 52 points.

It's a noteworthy achievement to win a Marine Corps wide competition. The pride and professionalism displayed by LCPL's Manrique, Merritt, and Sessions was clearly evident and gained the respect and admiration of their fellow Marine competitors.

Well done!

By: LtCol Jim Turner



COMMANDING GENERAL VISITS 4TH AA BN

LtCol DeGuzman, SgtMaj Donahue, and members of the battalion staff hosted Major General (select) John J. McCarthy, Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, during a visit on August 21st.

Major General McCarthy toured the battalion facility, visited each section, and spoke with the Marines and

Sailors in each area.

LtCol DeGuzman held a luncheon attended by SgtMaj Donahue, the battalion staff, Major General McCarthy, and SgtMaj Cruz, the 4th Marine Division Sergeant Major.

During lunch Major General McCarthy shared some of his career experiences with those in attendance. After lunch

there was a command brief followed by an in-depth discussion of battalion-specific issues. During this time SgtMaj Cruz took time to speak the Marines and Sailors in the battalion.

Major General McCarthy will be the guest speaker at Tampa's Marine Corps Birthday Ball on November 16th.

HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE COMPANY TAMPA, FLORIDA

H & S Company sent crews, mechanics and other support personnel to Amphibious Operations Training (AOT), CAX 7, and CAX 8 this summer. Training highlights included setting up an ammunition supply point (ASP) on the beach, tactical driving in the

mountains of Southern CA, and an NBC training evolution. Some Marines supported the 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion's staff annual training (AT) during a Command Post Exercise (CPX) with the 3rd AA Bn at Camp Pendleton. The battalion staff

attended a week long course on rapid planning at Coronado, CA during the second week of their AT. These exercises provided valuable experience and gave the Tampa Marines an opportunity to hone their individual warfighting skills.

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COMPANY A(-) NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

After intense preparation Company A(-) went to Coronado CA for Amphibious Operations Training (AOT).

While at AOT the Norfolk Marines trained with their counterparts from Galveston and Tampa as well as 2nd Bn,

24th Marines. The AOT concluded with a field exercise in which these Marines provided amphibious lift support.

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3RD PLATOON, COMPANY A GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

The Marines of 3rd Platoon, Company A kept busy during the summer annual training (AT). Marines participated in a variety of events ranging from the AAV gunners course, to the two week AAV crewman course to CAX 8 at 29 Palms, California. During CAX 3rd

Platoon operated as three distinct units. The Mobility Counter Mobility Section towed the MK-154 Mine Clearing Line Charge trailer and transported the combat engineers needed to clear lanes. The Communication Section served as the critical

communications link between the Ground Command Element Commander and the maneuver units. The final platoon served as the primary source of mobility for all infantry assigned to CAX 8. Every crew and section worked together to successfully accomplish their mission.

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COMPANY B(-) JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

The training received this summer improved the tactical ability of the Jacksonville Marines. They went to 29 Palms for their annual training (AT) this year to support a com-

arms exercise (CAX). Focusing on gunnery training, they fired all organic weapons to included the MK-19 40 mm grenade launcher, M-2 .50 caliber heavy machine gun,

and the M240G medium machine gun. They also participated in the Mobile Assault Course in the Delta Corridor. Additionally, some of the Marines conducted tactical land driving while at CAX.

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3RD PLATOON, COMPANY B GALVESTON, TEXAS

Fifty Galveston Marines deployed for their two week annual training to Camp Pendleton in support of Amphibious Orientation Training.

The summer marked the accumulation of a year of hard work and demanding training to support operations of a Marine Air Ground Taskforce

(MAGTF). While aboard the USS Cleveland the Galveston Marines conducted launch and recovery operations and planned amphibious assaults.

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